

L
N520
A63p
DC
no. 5

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

CLASSICAL ART

LATE GREEK ROOM

TERRA COTTAS



CLASSICAL ART

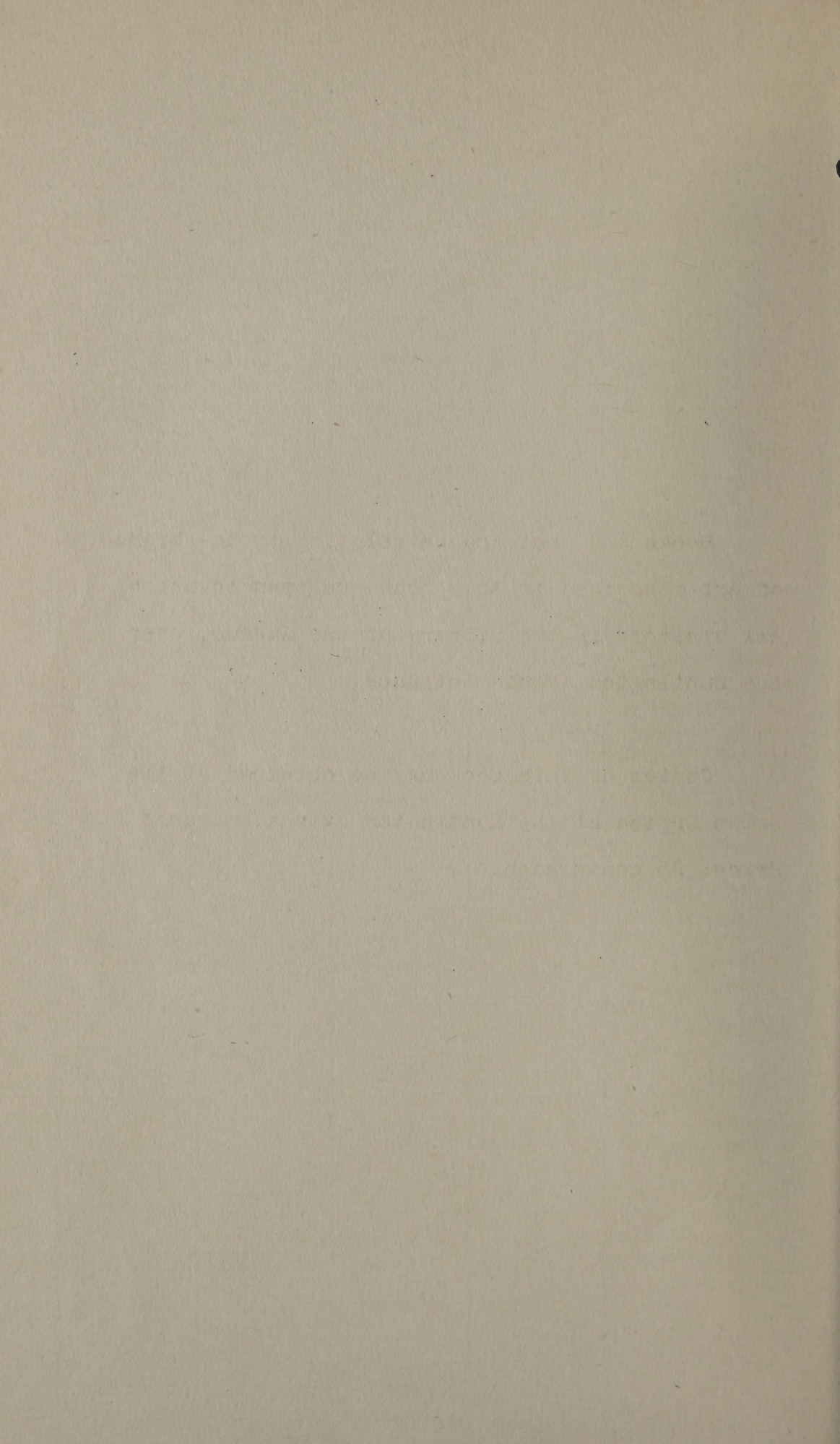
Late Greek Room:
Terra cottas

Department of Classical Art
Gallery Guide no. 5

FCB
B
DC

Books and photographs relating to the branch of art described in this book are open to use by all visitors in the Library of the Museum, over the Huntington Avenue Entrance.

Copies of this book may be obtained at the Sales Office at the Huntington Avenue Entrance.
Price: 25 cents each.



CLASSICAL ART.

Late Greek Room.

Terra-cotta figurines of the later Hellenistic Period from Asia Minor, Southern Italy and Sicily.

During the Hellenistic Period, which extends approximately from the reign of Alexander to the Roman conquest of Greece (300-100 B. C.), the new cities established in Egypt and Asia Minor by Alexander and his successors became the political and artistic centers of the Greek world. Important schools of art flourished at Alexandria, Rhodes, Tralles and Pergamon, and it is not surprising that terra-cotta figurines showing typically Hellenistic traits have been found in large numbers in Asia Minor. The art of the period is characterized by strong individualism, by an increasing tendency toward realism and psychological delineation and by an interest in the picturesque and transitory aspects of human life. The most noteworthy discoveries of figurines in Asia Minor have been made at Myrina, near Smyrna, where the majority of the statuettes are from graves of the third and second centuries B. C. Mythological subjects prevail, and representations of mortal women do not hold the conspicuous place which they occupy at Tanagra. Winged figures of Nike (Victory) and of Eros both as a child and as a youth are popular. The change which had taken place in religious ideals since the fifth century is shown by the abundance of statuettes of Aphrodite and Dionysos. Many caricatures indicate that physical deformities were regarded as a legitimate source of amusement, and figures of mourning Sirens and of grieving Erotes suggest the note of melancholy which constantly recurs during this decadent age of Greek civilization.

At Smyrna large figurines of terra-cotta have been found, not in graves, but among the ruins of houses where they were probably placed in private shrines to secure for the living the goodwill and protection of the gods. These large statuettes were generally made without the use of moulds, and many of them are more or less direct copies of fourth century types of sculpture. Many of them were gilded to imitate more costly works in gilt bronze. A large number of small grotesque figures and of caricatures have also been discovered at Smyrna. They may have been charms to ward off disease and misfortune, or have served simply as a source of amusement.

The Greeks in Southern Italy and Sicily, as well as

in northern Africa, produced figurines of terra-cotta which often show certain special characteristics, such as the composition of the clay or the local popularity of a certain type, but which in general are similar to the statuettes made in Greece proper and in Asia Minor.

Case 2. North wall.

Terra-cotta figurines from Myrina.

Top shelf, left to right.

Statuette. Eros floating down through the air. He is represented as a winged youth.

Head of a Statuette. Eros as a child, wearing a heavy round wreath bound with a fillet.

Statuette. Nike (Victory) flying. The wings are missing.

Statuette. Nike, flying. The wings are missing.

Statuette. Eros, in the guise of a young boy. He seems to be alighting after a flight.

Statuette. Nike. The wings and arms are missing. The form of the goddess is revealed through her light drapery, which clings closely about her as she floats downward against the breeze. The type is derived from the celebrated Nike of Paenios at Olympia - a work belonging to the last quarter of the fifth century B. C.

Second Shelf, left to right.

Statuette. Mourning Siren.

Sirens were closely associated with the idea of death and were frequently represented on grave monuments. (Compare the marble Siren in the Fourth Century Room). They are usually represented as women with the wings and body of a bird; this figure is wholly human, except for her great wings, and is a prototype of the angels of Christian art.

Statuette. Eros playing with a spitz dog.

Statuette. Nude Eros floating in the air. The wings are missing.

He holds a round shallow dish (patera) in his left hand, and a scroll in his right. Traces of a baldric across his breast. The feminine traits here so strongly marked in the head and in the proportions of the body are not uncommon in Hellenistic representations of Eros and of Dionysos.

Statuette. Boy and goose.

The inspiration for this genre scene is derived from the famous group by Boëthos, a sculptor of the third century B. C., representing a little boy struggling with a goose.

Statuette. Eros flying, crowned with a wreath of large ivy leaves and berries.

Statuette. A frightened baby Eros trying to protect a bunch of grapes from a greedy cock which pursues him.

Statuette. Eros, poised in air, playing double flutes. The flutes are missing. Over the mouth is tied the band of leather which enabled a performer to play a pair of instruments simultaneously.

Statuette. A chubby Eros flying with an open mirror.

Third Shelf, left to right.

Statuette. A flying baby Eros striking the strings of a large lyre with a plectrum.

Statuette. Youthful Eros.

Statuette. Atys, dancing. The cap with projecting flaps and the long, closely fitting trousers are characteristic parts of the Oriental costume. (Compare the bronze statuette of Atys in Case 6, west side, bottom shelf, left, in this room).

Statuette. A woman, crowned with a wreath of fruit and leaves, seated on a rock.

Statuette. A boy standing.

Over one shoulder hang the broad ends of the fillet which fastens his crown of leaves. He carries fruit in a lifted corner of his cloak. Above each ankle is tied a ribbon.

Statuette. Eros, flying. There are holes in the shoulders for the attachment of wings.

Statuette. Eros and a peacock with its tail spread.

Fragment of a statuette. The bust of a woman wearing a Phrygian cap.

Bottom Shelf, left to right.

Statuette. Dionysos leaning on a low pillar. The elaborate arrangement of the hair, with its garland of leaves and berries, the feminine type of face, the relaxed pose and the use of the cloak as a background for the youthful figure, are elements derived from late Greek sculptural representations of the god.

Statuette. Eros flying. On the back is inscribed the name of the maker, Diphilos. Signatures do not occur on Tanagra figurines, and only rarely on statuettes from Myrina, where the name of Diphilos is the most frequent.

Statuette. A woman, standing, holding a child in her arms.

Statuette. Woman standing.

Statuette. Eros flying.

Statuette. Woman standing.

Case 3.

Terra-cotta figurines from Myrina.

Top Shelf, left to right.

Group. Eros and Psyche.

Statuette. Eros in the lion's skin of Herakles. The skin is much too large for the small god who laughs at his own jest of an attempted disguise. He wears rings on his thighs and ankles and two bracelets on his left arm. The whimsical conceit is worked out with the careful elaboration of detail common in productions of the Hellenistic age. In preservation the statuette is almost perfect, the surface is sharp and fresh and the modelling shows sympathetic understanding of childish forms. The figure was fashioned by hand, not made in a mould, and is one of the best from Myrina.

Statuette. Eros as a god of Plenty. In one arm he carries a large cornucopia decorated with reliefs and filled with fruit, and with his right hand pours a libation from a shallow bowl (phiale). He is crowned with a wreath, wears a fawn skin and a cloak, bracelets, a ring on each ankle and one on his left thigh. The figure is modelled with even greater elaboration of detail than the Eros at the left, but is inferior to it in charm and freshness of style.

Statuette. Eros draws his sword with spirited action as he flies.

Second Shelf, left to right.

Statuette. Nike flying. She holds a comic mask and a scroll. Her wings are missing.

Statuette. Eros and a fawn.

Statuette. Eros flying. The wings are missing.

Group. Eros beside a column watching a kneeling child, his slave, who fastens his sandal. On top of the column a figure of Nike with a wreath.

Statuette. Eros flying. The wings are missing.

Statuette. A little boy carrying an alabastron. The charm of the subject lies in the effort exerted by the baby to keep on his shoulder the burden of the light toilet-vase, which is heavy only by comparison with the strength of the small bearer.

Statuette. Eros flying.

Statuette. Eros flying. The wings are missing.

Third Shelf, left to right.

Lamp, in the form of a statuette, probably from Myrina.

A bust of Hekate holding horizontally across her body a large torch which serves as the spout of the lamp. The colors are well preserved, - gilt, red and pink.

Statuette. Woman standing. The type resembles some of the Tanagra figurines.

Group. Eros riding in a chariot drawn by two goats.

Statuette. Eros flying.

Statuette. Eros on a couch, wearing a cloak, and crowned with a heavy round wreath. In his right hand a shallow bowl (phiale). His wings are missing.

Statuette. Aphrodite with a goose.

The high ornate headdress is of Oriental origin; the double baldric of plastic discs crossed between the breasts appears in many works of Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman art.

Group. A child standing beside a pillar, decorated with a wheel-ornament, is feeding a goose with a bunch of grapes.

Statuette. Eros floating through the air.

Bottom Shelf, left to right.

Statuette. Aphrodite leaning on a small statue. On the back is inscribed the name of the maker, Aglaophon,

Statuette. An actor wearing a comic mask.

Statuette. Woman standing.

Statuette. Woman standing.

Statuette. Woman standing. She raises her right hand to her throat.

Statuette. Woman standing. On her head a wreath of leaves and ribbons, below which are large ivy leaves and berries.

Case 4. West Wall.

Terra-cotta figurines of the Hellenistic Period from Southern Italy, Sicily and Asia Minor.

Top Shelf, left to right.

Antefix. South Italian. Fourth or third century, B. C.

Tiles of terra-cotta were generally used as the outer roof-covering of buildings in antiquity. Marble tiles were employed only on the more elaborate structures. The cover tiles along the horizontal eaves were often decorated with moulded and painted discs or palmettes, called antefixes, and similar tiles adorned the ridge. A more elaborate ornament (acroterion) was usually placed at each of the three angles of the pediment.

The youthful head on this antefix is a type not uncommon on roof-tiles from Tarentum. The subject is identified as Herakles by the lion's-skin cap; the flaps or cheek-pieces of the cap are turned up and modelled in the shape of wings for decorative effect.

Statuette. From the vicinity of Capua.

Herakles resting from his labors. He has spread the lion's skin on the ground and is reclining upon it. In his left hand is a large drinking horn; his right hand was supported by his club. The muscular development of the body is not carried so far as to be out of keeping with the nobility of the head. The figure is probably derived from some larger work of sculpture.

Antefix. South Italian.

Mask of Medusa of the fine type which marks the transition from the ugly, grinning masks of the archaic period to the beautiful and pathetic type popular in late Greek and Roman times.

Mask of Medusa. Etruscan.

The face is of the severe, fine type usual in representations of Medusa in Hellenistic art.

Second Shelf, left to right.

Head of a young warrior. From Tarentum.

Lent by Rear Admiral J. B. Murdock, U. S. N.

The intensity of expression which marks Hellenistic sculpture is reflected in this terra-cotta, and the influence of Scopas, the most vigorous and original sculptor of the fourth century B. C., is seen in the modeling of the face. The treatment of the eyes, even in this small head, shows how far the followers of his style depended on the effect of shadow rather than of form.

Group. Astrogal players. From Cumae or Capua.

The two girls are crouching in the usual posture, holding in their hands the knuckle-bones with which the game was played. (Compare two terra-cotta figures in the Fourth Century Room, Case 4, bottom shelf, south end). Behind the players a bird with outspread wings perches on a large spherical object; in front a spitz dog watches them alertly.

Head of Artemis Bendis. From Tarentum.

In Thrace Artemis was worshipped under the name of Bendis; the Thracian cult was introduced into Athens at the close of the fifth century B. C., during the lifetime of Socrates, and later spread through Asia Minor and Southern Italy.

This head is characterized as Bendis by the Thracian bonnet resembling a helmet, having a bushy fox-tail as a crest. On the front of the cap is a lion's-head mask.

Mask. From Tarentum.

The face of a laughing boy. He wears a round skull-cap on which are traces of pale blue color.

Statuette. From Lesbos.

A boy draped in a fringed cloak and crowned with a pierced diadem holds a pitcher (oinochoë) in one hand and a wine cup in the other hand.

Statuette. Probably from Smyrna.

A dancing baby Pan, with goat's legs.

Relief. From Centorbi, Sicily.

Lent by Nathaniel Bishop Farrar.

Mask of Medusa in high relief against a background of pointed leaves. A snake is knotted about her neck. At the top are two holes for suspension. Abundant remains of color, - white, red, pink, blue and black.

Head of a Woman. From Tarentum.

The head belonged to a statuette of unusually large size. The hair is parted and combed down flat over the ears; the pupils of the eyes are incised and the glance is directed upward with great intensity of expression.

Head of Eros. From Northern Africa.

Lent by Mr. Richard Norton.

The head is of red clay with remains of white paint on the surface.

Third Shelf, left to right.

Fragments of terra-cotta figurines from Smyrna.

Head of a bearded Satyr, bald and ivy-crowned.

Head of a young Satyr, with snub nose and pointed eye-brows. Traces of gilding in the hair.

Head of a bearded Satyr. Bald and ivy-crowned. From the same mould as the head at the extreme left, but the details are less sharp because of weathering.

Head, apparently of Herakles; he is beardless and has short curly hair bound with a fillet. Traces of gilding.

Two fragments of a statuette of a youth, (head and right thigh).

The figure of which these fragments formed a part

was probably a copy of some unidentified statue by Polykleitos, since in type and modelling it resembles a terra-cotta statuette, found also at Smyrna, representing the Polykleitan Diadumenos (an athlete binding his hair with a fillet).

Head of Herakles wearing a wreath of figs and fig leaves.

Statuette, Aphrodite (?).

Head of a young Satyr. A laughing boyish face, with tumbled hair.

Female head. Aphrodite (?). Traces of gilding.

Head of an old, bearded Satyr, with large ears and a bald flat crown.

Head of a youthful Dionysos, crowned with grapes and vine leaves, and wearing a broad fillet in his hair.

Face of a youth, probably Hermes. The style imitates works of sculpture of the fourth century B. C.

Head of Athena, wearing an Attic helmet.

Head of a bald, bearded Satyr, crowned with oak leaves and acorns.

Right leg of a large statuette. Remains of gilding applied over red, which in turn is over a white slip.

An ape-like head. Caricature.

Grotesque head, bald, with a huge nose hanging down over a twisted mouth from which the tongue protrudes.

Bottom Shelf, left to right.

Five statuettes from Myrina.

Woman standing.

Woman leaning against a square pillar, in front of which stands a small Eros.

Woman standing, with her cloak drawn up over her head.

Woman standing, holding a child in her arms.

Woman standing. She wears the usual dress (chiton) and cloak (himation) and has a diadem (stephané) in her hair.

Terra-cotta statuette of Aphrodite (in a separate case, centre of room). From Smyrna.

Among the ruins of private houses at Smyrna statuettes have been discovered which apparently belonged to domestic shrines. Many are reduced replicas or adaptations of fourth century types of sculpture modelled with a perfection of artistic skill which sets them apart from ordinary terra-cottas of commercial manufacture. The original of this figure of Aphrodite has not been identified, but its popularity is attested by numerous small copies in marble and bronze and on coins. The goddess stands on her right foot, lifting her left foot and bending her body forward as if to untie her sandal, which is, however, not represented. Her extended left arm rested on a support, probably in the shape of a column. A few traces remain of the color with which the surface was covered. Among existing terra-cotta figurines this statuette is hardly surpassed in harmony of proportions, delicacy of modelling and excellence of preservation. Owing to the complete destruction of the ancient town, entire figures from this site are very rare.

c 1915

